

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6024

AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGASCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 10167

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, ET

SUBJECT: DISRUPTIONS AND DISSIDENCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

REF: ADDIS 9875

1. THE TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE SUMMARIZED UP-COUNTRY DISRUPTIONS BY PROVINCE. THERE FOLLOWS ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON DISRUPTIONS WHICH HAS COME TO OUR ATTENTION SINCE THAT TELEGRAM WAS DRAFTED. BY PROVINCE THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) GOJJAM -- RADIO ETHIOPIA IN AMHARIC ON AUGUST 19 ANNOUNCED THAT WUBALE TEGEGNU AND 34 OF HIS COLLABORATORS WHO HAD OPPOSED THE RECENT LAND REFORM PROCLAMATION IN GOJJAM PROVINCE HAVE RALLIED TO THE GOVERNMENT SIDE.

(B) WOLLEGA -- EMBOFF HAS SEEN A LETTER WRITTEN BY A ZEMETCHA STUDENT STATIONED IN GHIMBI WHICH INDICATED THAT A CONFRONTATION HAD TAKEN PLACE RECENTLY BETWEEN SEVERAL THOUSAND PEASANTS AND GOVERNMENT TROOPS IN THAT AREA. FOUR FARMERS WERE KILLED IN THE ENCOUNTER.

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A RELIABLE SOURCE WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM A VISIT TO

HIS NATIVE ARJO (SOUTH OF NEKEMPTE) REPORTED THAT PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS HAD BEEN CONFISCATING MONEY AND GOODS FROM RICH LANDOWNERS IN THE AREA. THEY ATTEMPTED TO FORCE THE WOREDA TREASURER TO TURN OVER KEYS TO GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND WHEN HE REFUSED, TRIED TO BREAK INTO HIS HOUSE. DURING THE BREAK-IN ATTEMPT, THE TREASURER SHOT AND KILLED THE HEAD OF THE PEASANT ASSOCIATION WHICH EFFECTIVELY TERMINATED ACTIVITIES BY THAT GROUP.

EMBOFF RETURNING FROM THE NEKEMPTE AREA AUGUST 17 WITNESSED PEOPLE MOURNING FOR 27 YEAR OLD ZEMETCHA LEADER WHO HAD BEEN KILLED BY A LOCAL LAND HOLDER NEAR THE TOWN OF TIBBE. COFFIN WAS BEING TRANSPORTED TO AMBO AND EMBOFF WAS DIRECTED BY ARMED SOLDIERS TO MAKE ROOM IN HIS VEHICLE FOR ACCOMPANYING ZEMATCH. ROLLING DEFRIEFING OF ZEMATCH INDICATED ALL STUDENTS WERE BEING WITHDRAWN TO AMBO FOR SAFETY.

THIRD SOURCE RETURNING FROM WOLLEGA AUGUST 18 WAS MISTAKEN FOR ZEMETCHA STUDENT ATTEMPTING TO RETURN TO ADDIS AND HAD DIFFICULTY BOARDING BUS IN NEKEMPTE. SOURCE REPORTED LARGE NUMBER OF ZEMETCHA STUDENTS ARE ATTEMPTING TO RETURN TO ADDIS TO DEMONSTRATE AGAINST DIRG ON SEPTEMBER 13 RECOLUTION DAY. ZEMETCHA STUDENTS REPORTEDLY BELIEVE THAT CELEBRATION OF ANNIVERSARY OF DIRG'S ASSUMING POWER IS INAPPROPRIATE BECAUSE THE CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY HAS NOT IMPROVED.

(C) KAFFA -- ETHIOPIAN MEDIA HAVE CARRIED REPORTS THAT SEVEN "SHIFTAS" (OUTLAWS) WHO OPPOSED GOVERNMENT LAD REFORM HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN THE DECHA REGION OF KAFFA PROVINCE. THEY WERE CAPTURED BY SECURITY FORCES LED BY COL. GETAHUN BELAYEHU IN COOPERATION WITH THE LOCAL PEASANT ASSOCIATION.

(D) SHOA -- ETHIOPIAN MEDIA HAVE REPORTED THAT 21 FUGITIVES FROM THE BUTAJIRA REGION WHO FLED TO THE BUSH FOLLOWING THE RECENT URBAN LAND NATIONALIZATION HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES UP TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES. TOTAL NUMBER OF REPORTED FUGITIVES WHO HAVE "SURRENDERED" TO GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES NOW EXCEEDS 1000. A SOURCE USUALLY KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THIS MATTER TOLD EMBOFF THAT BECAUSE OF HEAVY CASUALTIES GOVERNMENT SUFFERED IN ATTEMPTING

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TO SUBDUE GURAGES, PMAC AGREED TO WITHDRAW ALL TROOPS FROM BUTAJIRA AREA IF GURAGES WOULD RETURN TO THEIR FARMS. (MANY HAD FLED TO THE BUSH PREVIOUSLY TO OPPOSE GOVERNMENT AND ITS LAND REFORM PROGRAM.) NOW AS NATIVES RETURN TO THEIR FARMS, LOCAL LEADERS REPORT NUMBER OF RETURNEES TO PMAC BY LETTER AND PMAC ANNOUNCES NUMBER IN PAPER AS "FUGITIVES WHO HAVE SURRENDERED TO GOVERNMENT SIDE."

SAME SOURCE AS ABOVE PARA STATED THAT GOVERNMENT NO LONGER ATTEMPTING TO ROOT OUT MANZ INSURGENTS (BIRU BROTHERS) AND THOSE IN TEGUIET-BULGA AREA BECAUSE OF HEAVY CASUALTIES. SOURCE CLAIMS GOVERNMENT SUFFERED 650 KILLED/WOUNDED IN MANZ AND 350 CASUALTIES IN LATTER AREA.

COMMENT: THESE FIGURES ARE PROBABLY HIGH BUT CONCEIVABLY WITHIN THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY. END COMMENT.

AMERICAN SOURCE REPORTS THAT APPROXIMATELY 100 ZEMATCH WERE ARRESTED IN HOLETA FOR ROBBING LANDLORDS. WHEN ARRESTED, ZEMATCH HAD ACCUMULATED ONE MACHINE GUN, SEVERAL M-1'S AND OTHER WEAPONS, AND 35,000 DOLLARS IN CASH. SOURCE WITNESSED ZEMATCH BEING HAULED OFF IN POLICE BUSES WITH BARRED WINDOWS. (E) GEMU GOFA -- AMERICAN SOURCE HAS IT FROM WOREDA GOVERNOR THAT TROOPS UNDER GOVERNOR'S COMMAND KILLED 28 PEASANTS IN A CONFRONTATION SOUTH OF ARBA MINCH THE WEEK OF AUGUST 11. THE PEASANTS HAD BEEN GIVEN ANTI-MALARIAL TABLETS BY ZEMETCHA STUDENTS AND TOLD THESE WOULD MAKE THEM IMMUNE TO GOVERNMENT BULLETS. PEASANTS THEN PROCEEDED TO RELIEVE LOCAL LANDOWNERS OF THEIR WEALTH AND REFUSED TO HEED POLICE CEASE AND DESIST ORDER. GOVERNOR CLAIMED THAT HE PLEADED WITH PEASANT GROUP NOT TO PROVOKE TROOPS INTO FIRING ON THEM BUT HE WAS FORCED TO GIVE OPEN FIRE ORDER TO BREAK UP THE MENACING CROWD INTENT ON ATTACKING TROOPS.

(F) SIDAMO -- SAME SOURCE AS IN PRECEDING PARAGRAPH TOLD EMBOFF THAT GUJJI TRIBE HAS BEEN AROUSED AROUND WOLLAMO SODDO BECAUSE FORMER LANDLORDS HAVE KILLED SEVERAL PEASANTS AND CASTRATED THEM TO MAKE IT APPEAR THE WORK OF GUJJIS.

(G) TIGRE -- RELIABLE BRITISH COLLEAGUE TOLD EMBOFFS HE HAS CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT TWO PRISONERS WERE FREED FROM ENDA SELASSIE JAIL BY "ONE OF THE TIGRE LIBERATION GROUPS." WE HAVE IT FROM ONE USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE THAT TLF ACTION WAS TO RELEASE A TLF TRAINEE AND THAT FIVE OTHER PRISONERS WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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RELEASED INCIDENTALLY. HE CLAIMED ONE JAILER KILLED IN THE ACTION AND TWO WOUNDED.

2. COMMENT: SAME ACCOUNT AS GIVEN IN REFTEL APPLIES TO THE ABOVE INCIDENTS. WHILE THEY TEND TO MAKE UPCOUNTRY TRAVEL MORE UNCERTAIN, THEY HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON THE DIRG'S HOLD ON POWER, WHICH IS CENTERED HERE IN ADDIS. THE POSSIBLE EFFECT OF THE UN-AUTHORIZED RETURN OF NUMEROUS ZEMETCH TO ADDIS MAY BE ANOTHER STORY HOWEVER (SEE SEPTTEL).
HUMMEL

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